

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12 and 14 have been amended. Claims 8 and 13 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 3-5, 9-12 and 14-15 remain for further consideration. No new matter has been added.

The objections and rejections shall be taken up in the order presented in the Official Action.

1. Claims 1, 3-5 and 8-15 currently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for allegedly failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter deemed to be the invention.

The claims have been amended as necessary to obviate this rejection.

2. Claims 1, 3-5 and 8-15 currently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Published Application 2007/0052664 to Hirakata et al.. (hereinafter “Hirakata”) in view of U.S. Patent 6,351,074 to Ito et al. (hereinafter “Ito”).

CLAIM 1

As amended, claim 1 recites a trigger mechanism for at least two fluorescent tubes connected to a common transformer circuit. The trigger mechanism includes *“a switch that is configured and arranged to selectively shunt the outputs of the first and second tubes, where when the switch is in a first position the first and second current signals are shunted together and can be detected by the backlight control circuit jointly, and when the switch is in a second position the first and second current signals are not shunted together and the first and second current signal are detected by the backlight control circuit separately from each other.”*

(emphasis added). The Official Action contends that Hirakata discloses such a switch. However, a fair and proper reading of this lengthy reference fails to reveal any disclosure or suggestion of a switch that shunts the outputs of first and second tubes. For example, FIGs. 14-15 disclose only a single tube. FIGs. 19, 21(a), 21(b), 22(a), 22(b), 23(a), 23(b), 24, 25, 26(a), 26(b), 27(a), 27(b), 30(a), 30(b) and 31 although disclosing multiple tubes, all fail to disclose or suggest shunting the outputs of first and second tubes using a switch. It is worth noting that the Official Action alleges what Hirakata discloses this feature, but fails to cite any locations in the specification or figures in support of the allegation. If the Office maintains that Hirakata teaches the claimed shunt feature, then the undersigned attorney respectfully requests that the Examiner specify with particularity the location(s) in Hirakata relied upon. Assuming for a moment that Hirakata and Ito are properly combinable, without admitting as much, then the combined references still fail to disclose the feature of the switch that shunts the outputs of the first and second tubes. Accordingly, the combination of Hirakata and Ito is incapable of rendering obvious the claimed invention.

CLAIM 5

As amended, claim 5 recites a fluorescent tube driver circuit, which includes “*a switch that in a first position shunts the first and second current signals at a low voltage side of the first and second fluorescent tubes*”. (emphasis added). As set forth above, contrary to the contentions in the Official Action, a fair and proper reading of Hirakata reveals that this prior art reference neither discloses nor suggests a switch that shunts the low voltage sides of the first and second fluorescent tubes.

In addition, claim 5 also recites the features:

“a first current path that receives the first current signal, and includes a first ballast serially connected to a high voltage side of a first fluorescent tube;
a second current path that receives the second current signal and is electrically parallel to the first current path, and includes a second ballast serially connected to a high voltage side of a second fluorescent tube;” (emphasis added)

Neither Hirakata nor Ito discloses or suggests two such parallel current paths, each having their own ballast. Thus, assuming for a moment that Hirakata and Ito are properly combinable, without admitting as much, then the combined references still fail to disclose the feature of the switch that shunts the outputs of the first and second tubes, in combination with first and second current paths, each having their own ballast.

Accordingly, the combination of Hirakata and Ito is incapable of rendering obvious the claimed invention.

CLAIM 12

As amended, claim 12 recites a liquid crystal display backlight control circuit, which includes “a double pole single throw semiconductor switch that in a first position shunts the first and second current signals at a low voltage side of the first and second fluorescent tubes”. (emphasis added). Again, as set forth above with respect to claim 1, contrary to the contentions in the Official Action, a fair and proper reading of Hirakata reveals that this prior art reference neither discloses nor suggests a switch that operates as a shunt.

In addition, claim 12 also recites the features:

“a first current path that receives the first current signal, and includes a first ballast serially connected to a high voltage side of a first fluorescent lamp;
a second current path that receives the second current signal and is electrically parallel to the first current path, and includes a second ballast serially connected to a high voltage side of a second fluorescent lamp;”

Neither Hirakata nor Ito discloses or suggests two such parallel current paths, each having their own ballast. Thus, assuming for a moment that Hirakata and Ito are properly combinable, without admitting as much, then the combined references still fail to disclose the feature of the double pole single throw semiconductor switch that shunts the outputs of the first and second tubes, in combination with first and second current paths, each having their own ballast.

Accordingly, the combination of Hirakata and Ito is incapable of rendering obvious the claimed invention.

For all the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 3-5, 9-12 and 14-15 is respectfully requested.

If a telephone interview could assist in the prosecution of this application, please call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Patrick O'Shea", is written over a horizontal line.

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